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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the European Union's Statement on the Death Penalty

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 18, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We want to thank the European Union for its expression of concern regarding the death penalty in the United States and assure the European Union that its concerns will be sent to our capital.

The use of the death penalty in the United States is a decision of democratically elected governments at the federal and individual state levels and is not prohibited by international law, nor does capital punishment violate any OSCE commitments. The people of the United States, acting through their freely elected representatives, have chosen, in most states, not to abolish the death penalty.

The U.S. judicial system provides exhaustive protections to ensure that the death penalty is not applied in an extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary manner.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of the imposition of the death penalty continues to be the subject of vigorous and open discussion among the American people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.